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THE MILITANT

A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF WORKING PEOPLE

VOL. 71/NO. 8 FEBRUARY 26, 2007

Mass book festival opens in Havana

Marked by discussion on cultural policy of Cuban Revolution

BY JONATHAN SILBERMAN AND MARTÍN KOPPEL

HAVANA—Students, workers, professionals, and entire families packed into the grounds of the colonial-era San Carlos de la Cabaña fortress on the opening day of the 16th Havana International Book Fair here February 9. The massive popular festival is an expression of the widespread thirst for reading among Cubans and the priority given by Cuba's revolutionary leadership to expand access to education and culture.

The previous evening, the book fair was inaugurated at an event attended by Raúl Castro, Cuba's acting president. Minister of Culture Abel Prieto addressed the gathering, in which numerous other government ministers and prominent Cuban writers and artists participated. The event was broadcast on TV and covered widely in the press.

Argentina, the book fair's country of honor this year, was represented by its secretary of culture, José Nun. This year's fair is also dedicated to two Cuban writers, poet César López and historian

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Washington claims Iranian-made explosives are used in Iraq

BY MA'MUD SHIRVANI

February 13—U.S. military officials who refused to reveal their names held a news briefing in Baghdad February 11 to show "evidence" that Tehran is arming Shiite militias in Iraq with armor-piercing explosives that have supposedly killed more than 170 U.S. soldiers. What they presented included canisters of EFPs, or explosively formed penetrators, whose serial numbers they claimed showed the devices were made in Iran.

In trying to rationalize the U.S.-led squeeze on Iran, which is causing rifts among its rulers, White House spokesman Tony Snow said February 12 that Tehran had approved the EFPs' shipment.

These claims, however, seemed to have gone a little too far, even within the Pentagon. While in Jakarta, Indonesia, today, Gen. Peter Pace, chairman of the U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, contradicted some of these assertions.

"It is clear that Iranians are involved, and it's clear that materials from Iran are involved, but I would not say by what I

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U.S. forces in Iraq to 'strike relentlessly'

Petraeus takes command of U.S. troops

Iraqi gov't closes borders with Iran, Syria



AFP/Getty Images/Dave Furst

U.S. troops from 5-20 Infantry Regiment engage in firefight February 10 in Baghdad's Adamiyah neighborhood. The regiment and troops of the 82nd Airborne, which arrived recently as part of Washington's escalation of the war, have set up a new outpost there.

BY SAM MANUEL

WASHINGTON, February 14—Gen. David Petraeus called on U.S. troops to "defeat those who oppose the new Iraq" and to "strike them relentlessly." He made the remarks in a February 10 letter to U.S. soldiers, issued the same day Petraeus took command of the U.S. forces in the country.

Three days later, the Iraqi government headed by Prime Minister Nouri al-Maliki announced a range of new "security" measures. These include a crackdown on militias in Baghdad and the temporary closure of the country's borders with Iran and Syria.

Just before leaving for Baghdad, and

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Black Farmers Association meets to demand end to racist discrimination

BY JACQUIE HENDERSON AND KARL BUTTS

DALLAS—More than 400 small farmers attended a February 8–10 conference here to discuss their fight for land and against racist discrimination by the U.S. government, banks, and big business. Most of the participants came from Alabama, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma, and Texas. The event was organized by the National Black Farmers Association (NBFA), and attracted some other farmers and supporters from Florida, Iowa, Kansas, and Virginia.

Several guests from the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) addressed the conference. Dennis Pittman, representing Smithfield Foods, which operates the world's largest hog slaughterhouse in Tar Heel, North Carolina, also spoke. These individuals received a cool response from farmers subjected to years of abuse—from denied loan requests to stolen land.

As Burnis Turner Jr., a farmer from Point, Texas, put it in challenging USDA official Norman Bade, "We all know why we have been turned down for these programs. It's because we have the wrong paint job."

After Bruce Knight, USDA under secretary for marketing and regulatory

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Militant/Jacquie Henderson

More than 400 African American farmers attend February 10 conference in Dallas.

London uses 'antiterror' arrests to undermine democratic rights

BY PAUL DAVIES

LONDON, February 10—British police used the government's new "antiterror" laws to arrest nine men on January 31 and charge five of them with "intention" to kidnap and behead a British soldier. The men were arrested following dawn raids on their homes in Birmingham, England, and then held for 10 days without charges against them.

London and the big-business media are now using the case to further undermine free speech and other democratic rights and win support for the rulers' "war on terrorism," even though the Foreign Office recently told cabinet ministers and British diplomats to stop using the term as too inflammatory.

Armed cops stood guard outside the court where those arrested appeared

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Meat packers renew 'Militant' subscriptions

BY OLYMPIA NEWTON

February 14—"After a sluggish start, we made some progress winning renewals and new long-term readers to the *Militant* this past weekend," wrote Frank Forrestal, a meat packer in Des Moines, Iowa, February 12. "On Friday, we picked up a one-year renewal from a Firestone rubber worker, who originally signed up at a plant gate. On Saturday, five meat packers renewed in Albert Lea and Austin, Minnesota; three workers in Perry, Iowa; and two workers at the Swift plant in Marshalltown, Iowa. On Sunday, two construction workers renewed their subscriptions."

Such efforts are needed everywhere

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Also Inside:

Students in Canada rally for lower tuition fees

BY BRETT COLLINS AND JOHN STEELE

TORONTO—Thousands of college and university students from the Greater Toronto Area and across Ontario marched in sub-freezing temperatures to the provincial government buildings February 7 to demand an immediate freeze on rising tuition fees and their reduction to 2004 levels. The mobilization was part of a National Day of Action organized by the Canadian Federation of Students (CFS) in 30 cities across the country.

"We have to force the government to lower the fees," student Kevin Grant told the *Militant.* Grant arrived at the demonstration by bus with more than 200 students from Laurentian University in Sudbury, five hours north of Toronto. "I have a $5,000 debt after one year and it will go to $50,000," he said.

Although everyone was united for the common cause, there were mixed feelings about how the protest was conducted. Student Kirk Holmes said he was concerned the march was "too polite" and "could have been felt better by the officials." Others said it was a good lead-up to the upcoming Ontario provincial elections set for October 10, and hoped it would become a hot topic for the political parties.

Supporters of the students provided free hot soup and corn bread for the protesters, who marched several miles in the cold from the University of Toronto gathering point. Graham Boland from York University said it was "good that they came out for our cause."

The CFS points out that the cost of going to a university or college in Ontario and many other provinces has more than doubled, as a result of massive cuts in transfer payments for education from the federal government to the provinces in the early 1990s. This means, according to the CFS, that Canada's more than 1 million post-secondary students are struggling with a debt load of Can$20 billion, with the amount growing by Can$1.5 million a day (Can$1=US 86 cents). The CFS looks to Quebec as an example where massive student mobilizations over many years have kept university tuition fees at half the national average, and where college is free.

Speakers at the Toronto action included Howard Hampton, a leader of the Ontario New Democratic Party; Wayne Samuelson, president of the Ontario Federation of Labour; and Syd Ryan, from the Ontario division of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

Tuitions "won't change immediately," said student Brad Nicolaou. But the demonstration "brings awareness to the cause."

Brett Collins is a student at York University in Toronto.



Militant/John Steele

February 7 protest in Toronto was part of national day of student actions in Canada

Boston event features Iran's UN ambassador

BY TED LEONARD

BOSTON—Some 1,200 Boston University students, faculty, and staff, as well as guests, filled Metcalf Hall on the campus here February 1 for a program titled "Ask Iran." It was sponsored by the International Student Consortium. The event featured Javad Zarif, Iran's ambassador to the United Nations.

Zarif spoke via a live videoconference connection because U.S. State Department restrictions prevent him from traveling beyond 25 miles from the UN offices in New York.

Zarif greeted everyone "no matter which way you are facing." About 50 students wearing signs on their back reading, "We turn our back on terror," had stood up and turned their backs

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U.S. judge halts deportation of two of Los Angeles 8

BY LAUREN HART

LOS ANGELES—A federal immigration judge rejected on January 30 Washington's attempt to deport Khader Hamide and Michel Shehadeh. Both are permanent residents of the United States. They are among seven Palestinians and one Kenyan known as the "L.A. Eight," who have been threatened with deportation since their arrests in January 1987.

Throughout four presidencies, U.S. officials have tried to deport the L.A. Eight for carrying out legal political activities in support of the struggle for Palestinian rights. These activities include distributing newspapers, participating in demonstrations, and raising money for medical and other social needs in Palestine. None of the eight was ever charged with any crime.

Judge Bruce Einhorn terminated the latest deportation proceedings against Hamide and Shehadeh, citing "the government's gross failure to comply" with an order to turn over "potentially exculpatory" evidence as a violation of the defendants' constitutional rights. He stressed the length of time the case has continued, saying that "all things must come to an end."

For the last 20 years, the case of the L.A. Eight has highlighted Washington's use of immigration laws to restrict democratic rights. The eight, all of whom had legal residency or visas, were first charged with advocating "the doctrines of world communism," a deportable offense under the 1952 witch-hunting McCarran-Walter Act. When Congress repealed that law in 1990, the government used the 1990 Immigration Act, then the 1996 Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act, and most recently the 2001 Patriot Act, to press its case for deportation.

"This is a vindication for us," said Shehadeh in a phone interview. "It is confirmation of what we've been saying for a long time, that this is a political case. The government has no evidence we've done anything wrong."

The latest ruling "is a big win, but it's not the end of the war," he added, saying he expects the government will appeal. "We've learned from the last 20 years that the government has deep pockets" and has been determined in its efforts against the L.A. Eight. The government has 30 days to appeal Einhorn's decision.

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Signed articles by contributors do not necessarily represent the Militant's views. These are expressed in editorials.

U.S.-led squeeze on Iran

Continued from front page

know that the Iranian government clearly knows or is complicit," Pace said.

Tehran said the charges are "unacceptable." Iran's foreign ministry spokesman, Mohammed Ali Hosseini, said "such accusations cannot be relied upon or presented as evidence. The United States has a long history in fabricating evidence."

Divisions among Iranian rulers

At the same time, the U.S.-orchestrated squeeze on Iran, aimed partly at forcing the country to abandon its nuclear energy program, is widening divisions within the ruling circles in Tehran. Iran's president, Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, is being criticized by some government officials and in the media for his "harsh rhetoric" on the nuclear issue, and for his failure to stanch unemployment and inflation.

A new front in the imperialist-led offensive to prevent Iran from gaining access to nuclear energy may be threats to the very lives of its scientists. On February 2, Strategic Forecasting (Stratfor), a U.S. private intelligence agency, said that Ardeshir Hosseinpour, the Iranian nuclear scientist who died in mid-January, "was in fact a Mossad target," referring to Israel's secret police. The British daily *The Times* reported the same in a February 4 article headlined, "Iranian nuclear scientist 'assassinated by Mossad.'"

The *Stratfor* dispatch cynically commented, "Decapitating a hostile nuclear program by taking out key human assets is a tactic that has proven its effectiveness over the years." It listed Iraqi nuclear scientists who died in "mysterious circumstances" prior to the 1981 Israeli air strike that destroyed Iraq's Osirak reactor.

'A piece of torn paper'

Ahmadinejad had dismissed as a "piece of torn paper" the December 23 resolution by the United Nations Security Council imposing sanctions on Iran over Tehran's refusal to suspend uranium enrichment, a key part in the nuclear fuel cycle. Ever since, Iran's president has come under more criticism by the opposition "reformers" and by forces directly associated with top state officials.

The conservative daily *Jomhouri-Eslami,* which reflects the views of Iran's "supreme leader," Ayatollah Ali Khamenei, took exception to Ahmadinejad's statement. An editorial in its January 18 issue said, "The [Security Council] resolution is certainly harmful for the country," but it is "too much to call it 'a piece of torn paper.'" The paper accused Ahmadinejad of using the nuclear issue to distract people from his failed policies. It added that his behavior was diminishing popular support for the country's nuclear program. And it called on the president to stay out of all nuclear matters.

The liberal daily *Kargozaran* reported that ever since the Security Council passed its sanctions resolution the number of traders in Iran's stock market has fallen by 46 percent. According to the paper, a group of influential capitalists met with a senior official of Iran's Supreme National Security Council and called for "moderation" on the nuclear issue.

As if in a rebuttal, Ahmadinejad returned to the matter in a January 21 speech at the Majles, Iran's parliament. "One of our own dear friends was telling me a few nights ago what is all this mess? We are paying a high price for being nuclear and we are getting damaged." Ahmadinejad defended his stance, saying that unlike other governments, "We have become nuclear without any commitment to any great powers."

After the UN Security Council approved sanctions, they "claimed that the Islamic Republic has been isolated, and we had to counter this," he stated. During a four-day trip to Latin America in January, when he visited Ecuador, Nicaragua, and Venezuela, Ahmadinejad said he was asked by a reporter why Washington was trying to isolate Iran. "I smiled, and said the U.S. wants to isolate Iran, but Iran has isolated the U.S.," he said.

Etemad-e-Melli, a daily associated with the liberal bourgeois opposition, commented on the president's trip by asking sarcastically: "Do you really assume people like Chávez [and] Ortega . . . can be Iran's strategic allies?" It added, "We should not build a house on water."

New extensive privatization drive

Meanwhile, Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani, the chairman of Iran's Expediency Council, announced January 22 that the regime was embarking on an extensive new privatization drive. Eighty percent of the government's stake in a range of state-run factories and other major enterprises are to be sold to private capitalists. Energy Minister Parviz Fattah told the press January 27 that at the outset seven power plants will be privatized. The cabinet is reportedly reviewing the sale of 107 state-owned oil companies.

Tehran is apparently seeking greater integration into the world capitalist market to counter its political isolation. Ahmadinejad ended his January 21 speech in Majles by saying: Washington "is telling us that the sanctions won't allow anyone to invest. But you know that barely a month after they imposed sanctions on us, we are now in the process of finalizing $16 billion of foreign investment."

On February 3, Ahmadinejad traveled to central Iran and inaugurated a power station near Isfahan. Iranian papers said this is the first such station built by the private sector, with capital from the United Arab Emirates and Germany.

Houston event at Texas Southern University promotes campaign to free the Cuban Five



Militant/Jacquie Henderson

HOUSTON—Tom Kleven (above), a professor at the Thurgood Marshall Law School at Texas Southern University, addressed a January 26 meeting here to win support for the campaign to free five Cuban revolutionaries imprisoned in the United States. The five were gathering information on ultrarightist groups that have organized violent attacks against Cuba from U.S. soil with Washington's complicity. The men were framed up by the FBI and convicted in 2001 on charges including "conspiracy to commit espionage," and in one case, "conspiracy to commit murder." The Houston event featured a showing of the video *Mission against Terror* and an update on the case from Gloria La Riva of the National Committee to Free the Five.

—STEVE WARSHELL

Boston event features Iran's ambassador to UN

Continued from page 2

to the screen; a couple minutes later they sat down.

Boston University provost David Campbell, and Bilal Bilici, president of the International Student Consortium, welcomed people to the event. The program began with remarks by the Iranian ambassador and Charles Dunbar, a Boston University professor of international relations who was U.S. ambassador to Qatar and then Yemen in the 1980s.

Zarif called for "dialogue" between Washington and Tehran, adding, "You need to be looking for a solution versus. provoking a confrontation." He said U.S. "accusations against Iran were being made to create divisions in our population."

Dunbar encouraged Tehran to cease its nuclear program until an agreement could be reached. "The burden of proof lies on the Iranian government to prove it is pursuing its nuclear program for peaceful purposes," he said, echoing Washington's claim that Tehran is secretly developing nuclear arms, the main U.S. government rationalization for its drive to squeeze Iran.

Most of the program was devoted to questions from the audience. More than 15 people took part, directing their comments at Iran's ambassador.

"Which cartoon did you think was best?" asked a student, referring to a contest held in Iran last year, which was backed by the country's president, of cartoons that mocked the Holocaust. Another student asked, "How many Jews do you think died in the Holocaust?"

"The Holocaust was an atrocity," Zarif responded. "It was genocide. But we should not let one genocide be used to justify another violation of human rights taking place for 60 years in Palestine."

The only sharp exchange came when Dean of Students Kenneth Elmore, the chairperson, would not let Zarif respond to comments made by Professor Dunbar. Pressure by many in the audience forced Elmore to reverse himself.

It began when a student asked, "What was the difference between Pakistan having a nuclear bomb and Iran?"

"Iran does not want a nuclear bomb," Zarif said. Pointing to the governments of India and Pakistan that have developed nuclear weapons without opposition by the imperialist powers, he added, "A nuclear bomb has not brought them security. . . . If you wanted security you would have to have first-strike capabilities or at least second strike capabilities."

Zarif said Iran is trying to develop a nuclear industry for peaceful purposes because it "is the most serious source of renewable energy."

"The international community does not believe Iran," Dunbar responded, reiterating his advice to Tehran to suspend its nuclear program and enter into discussions that would "hopefully" lead to Iran being allowed to develop a peaceful nuclear program.

Zarif took issue with Dunbar's use of "international community" to refer to Washington and its allies in the European Union, as well as the UN Security Council. Last year, Zarif said, representatives of 118 member states of the nonaligned movement met in Havana and passed a resolution saying that nobody has the right to interfere with Iran's nuclear program. "Don't you think that is the international community?" Zarif asked.

Iran's ambassador also pointed out that Tehran did suspend its nuclear program for two years. During that time, he was the lead negotiator for Iran's nuclear program, he said, when Washington did nothing but "procrastinate and reject any reasonable solution."

MILITANT LABOR FORUMS

CALIFORNIA

San Francisco

Washington's Spreading Wars. Speaker: Norton Sandler, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 23. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. *3926 Mission. Tel. (415) 584-2135.*

FLORIDA

Miami

U.S. Imperialism Moves to Increase Influence in the Balkans. Speaker: Deborah Liatos, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 23. Dinner, 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: $5 dinner, $5 program. *8365 NE 2nd Ave., Suite 206. Tel. (305) 756-4436.*

ILLINOIS

Chicago

The Civil Rights Movement and Its Lessons for Today. Speaker: Ernest Mailhot, Socialist Workers candidate for mayor of Chicago. Fri., Feb. 23. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program 8:00 p.m.. Donation: $5 dinner, $5 program. *3557 S. Archer Ave. Tel. (773) 890-1190.*

NEW YORK

Manhattan

Malcolm X: Revolutionary Fighter against Imperialism. Speaker: Paul Pederson, *Socialist Workers Party.* Fri., Feb. 23. Dinner, 7:00 p.m.; program, 8:00 p.m. Donation: $5 dinner, $5 program. *306 W. 37th St., 10th Floor (use north set of elevators) Tel. (212) 629-6649.*

PENNSYLVANIA

Pittsburgh

Thomas Sankara and the Fight against Imperialism Today. Speaker: Ved Dookhun, Socialist Workers Party. Includes film showing of Thomas Sankara speeches. Fri., Feb. 23. Dinner, 6:30 p.m., Program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: $5 dinner, $5 program. *5907 Penn Ave., Room 225. Tel. (412) 365-1090.*

TEXAS

Houston

Lowndes County: Fight for Political Rights in Jim Crow South. Speaker: John Benson, Socialist Workers Party. Sat., Feb. 24. Dinner 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: $5 dinner, $5 program. *4800 W. 34 St., Suite C-51A. Tel.: (713) 688-4919.*

WASHINGTON

Seattle

Special Forces in the Philippines: Part of U.S. Imperialism's Spreading Wars. Speaker: Chris Hoeppner, Socialist Workers Party. Fri., Feb. 23. Dinner 6:30 p.m.; program, 7:30 p.m. Donation: $5 dinner, $5 program. *5418 Rainier Ave. S. Tel. (206) 323-1755.*

‘Let people vote on war’

BY PAUL PEDERSON

“The 2006 election referendum on the war”—that’s what the Communist Party USA called last November’s congressional elections. This has been a common view in the middle-class left and among many liberal forces in the United States.

The call for the January 27 march on Washington to demand “Bring the troops home now!” made a similar point, advancing the illusion that the new Democratic majority in Congress can be lobbied to end the war. That action was called by United for Peace and

AS I SEE IT

Justice (UFPJ), a coalition that includes in its leadership the Communist Party and Committees of Correspondence, a split-off from the CPUSA, as well as liberal and pacifist groups such as the American Friends Service Committee, Green Party, and PAX Christi. “On Election Day the voters delivered a dramatic, unmistakable mandate for peace,” said the call for the UFPJ-initiated action. “Now Congress must act.”

But every time in history when opposition to imperialist war has swelled, including among most workers, the demand advanced by socialists, which has at times gained majority support, has been, “Let the people vote on war!” Take the war-making powers out of the hands of the government, including Congress!

The fact of the matter is that the November elections did not reflect a new, nationwide groundswell of popular opposition to the war. If that were true, why did Joseph Lieberman, a notorious warmongering Democrat who ran as an independent, win the senatorial election in Connecticut over his party’s nominee, the cable TV executive Ned Lamont, who called for a phased “redeployment” of U.S. troops in Iraq?

It’s also a false view promoted by groups such as the UFPJ that many in the Democratic majority in Congress oppose the war in Iraq. Many *Militant* articles and editorials in recent weeks have provided ample evidence to the contrary.

The institutions of bourgeois democracy in the United States—from the executive to the legislative branches of government, and beyond—do not and cannot represent the interests of the vast majority. They are instruments of the exploiting classes, and are used to advance the interests of the tiny minority of wealthy capitalists who rule the country and who profit from war.

At its founding in 1938, the Socialist Workers Party campaigned for a constitutional amendment that would require approval by a majority vote of the U.S. population in a nationwide referendum before the government could go to war.

The party and its press, read a statement printed in the May 21, 1938, edition of *Socialist Appeal*, “must become the most militant advocates of a popular referendum on the war. They must seek to have labor everywhere demand that the amendment be formulated to provide for a popular referendum on the undertaking of any war, be it allegedly ‘defensive’ or ‘aggressive,’ and that all citizens from the age of 18 upward, since from that age they are liable to military service, have the right to vote in the referendum.”

Between 1935 and 1941 Democratic congressman Louis Ludlow repeatedly proposed such an amendment. In 1938, a Gallup poll showed that 72 percent of the U.S. population supported it. It was nonetheless defeated in Congress every time it came up for a vote.

In a section titled “The Struggle Against Imperialism and War,” the Transitional Program, the founding document of the Fourth International, adopted in 1938, addressed this issue.

“No democratic reform, it is understood, can by itself prevent the rulers from provoking war when they wish it,” said the document, which was drafted by Russian revolutionary leader Leon Trotsky. “But notwithstanding the illusions of the masses in regard to the proposed referendum, their support of it reflects the distrust felt by the workers and farmers toward the bourgeois government and Congress. Without supporting and without sparing illusions, it is necessary to support with all possible strength the progressive distrust of the exploited toward the exploiters.”

The SWP again campaigned for this demand during the Korean War, as opposition to it became widespread in the working class, including through massive draft resistance among Puerto Ricans.

In an open letter to the president and members of Congress in May 1951, SWP national secretary James P. Cannon wrote the following, which stands up well more than half a century later: “Your differences are merely tactical. My differences with both sides in your so-called ‘Great Debate’ are fundamental. You are preoccupied with the problem of how to conduct a war the American people do not want and never approved. I propose to end the war at once and let the American people themselves decide the life and death questions of foreign policy.”

Immigrant rights caravan along U.S. frontier with Mexico demands: ‘No to Militarization of Border’



Militant/Sylvia Hansen

SAN YSIDRO, California—The Migrant March II Caravan started at the U.S.-Mexico border here February 2, to demand: “No to Militarization of the Border,” and “Equality and Justice for Migrants.” The caravan will travel along the border to Brownsville, Texas, stopping for meetings and rallies along the way. At the send-off, Micaela Saucedo (at right) reads a letter sent by Gabriela Barrios, whose son was killed by U.S. cops at the border with Mexico, on May 18, 2006. In background, border wall and immigration patrol vehicle can be seen.

—SYLVIA HANSEN

Meat packers renew ‘Militant’ subs

‘Militant’ Subscription Renewal Drive Jan. 20 – Feb. 25 ♦ Week 3 of 5			
Country	**Quota**	**Sold**	**%**
NEW ZEALAND	**20**	**15**	**75%**
UNITED KINGDOM			
London	**20**	**15**	**75%**
Edinburgh	**8**	**6**	**75%**
UK Total	**28**	**21**	**75%**
AUSTRALIA	**15**	**9**	**60%**
SWEDEN	13	7	54%
CANADA	25	13	52%
UNITED STATES			
Boston	**20**	**16**	**80%**
Washington, DC	**25**	**19**	**76%**
Newark	**25**	**16**	**64%**
Albany, NY	**5**	**3**	**60%**
Des Moines	**35**	**21**	**60%**
Seattle	**20**	**12**	**60%**
Philadelphia	30	17	57%
New York	50	28	56%
Los Angeles	30	15	50%
Twin Cities	27	13	48%
Chicago	20	9	45%
Miami	36	15	42%
Atlanta	17	7	41%
San Diego, CA	5	2	40%
San Francisco	20	8	40%
Houston	20	7	35%
Tampa, FL	3	1	33%
Birmingham	23	5	22%
Pittsburgh	15	2	13%
U.S. Total	426	216	51%
ICELAND	4	1	25%
Int’l totals	**531**	**282**	**56%**
Should be	**500**	**300**	**60%**

Continued from front page

to bring home the *Militant*’s five-week campaign to increase its long-term readership. With two weeks to go, the effort is 4 percent, or 18 subscriptions, behind schedule.

Many of the 282 people who have renewed, or subscribed for the first time for six months or longer, have taken advantage of special discounts on Pathfinder books and pamphlets.

“A young Eritrean worker decided to renew his subscription for six months and also bought copies of *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*” during a house meeting, wrote Ellen Berman from Philadelphia. “He said he thought it was important to build solidarity through supporting the paper.”

“At a house meeting in Chicago, a metal worker subscribed for six months and got *Cuba and the Coming American Revolution*,” reported Laura Anderson. “He subscribed to follow workers’ struggles around the world.”

As the examples above indicate, getting to know *Militant* readers in your area offers a chance to discuss revolutionary working-class politics. You can be part of making the *Militant* sub renewal drive a success by renewing your sub now and urging others to sign up too. For help in these efforts contact distributors listed on page 8.

ON THE PICKET LINE

Meat packers in Quebec strike for first union contract

TORONTO—Some 200 members of the United Food and Commercial Workers union have been on strike since October 5 at the A. Trahan slaughterhouse in Yamachiche, near Trois Rivières, in Quebec. The workers won union recognition in September 2003 and are fighting to force the employer to deal with the union. About 15,000 hogs are killed and cut in this plant each week, resulting in many work injuries.

In another development, pork producer Olymel announced at the end of January that it will close its slaughterhouse at Vallée-Jonction, south of Quebec City because the 1,100 meat packers there have refused massive wage and benefit concessions. On January 8 Olymel demanded that the workers, who are members of the Confederation of National Trade Unions, accept wage and benefit cuts of 38 percent or the plant would be closed. The unionists rejected this demand six days later by a vote of more than 99 percent. The company then demanded cuts of 27 percent, which was then voted down by 97 percent.

—Joe Young

Electronics workers in Scotland protest closing of two plants

IRVINE, Scotland—More than 200 angry Simclar electronics workers attended a February 8 Community union meeting to discuss pressing their fight. Owner Samuel Russell shut down without notice two factories, one here and one in Kilwinning, January 29. Four hundred twenty workers instantly lost their jobs with no guaranteed redundancy (severance) payments. Some 50 workers traveled to the company site near Dunfermline, Fife, February 7–8 to protest the firings and talk to workers there. Community union official John Steele announced plans for a demonstration in Irvine on February 17.

—Pamela Holmes

Explosions at two mines in Colombia kill 40 workers

Explosions at two underground mines in Colombia killed 40 coal miners the first week of February. The first was at the La Preciosa mine February 3 in the town of San Roque, 255 miles northeast of Bogota. It killed 32 workers. Another explosion February 6 occurred at the La Capilla mine in Boyaca province killing eight miners. Much of the coal mining operations in Colombia is done in small makeshift mines with very few safety procedures. Colombia is Latin America’s leading coal exporter. It has known coal reserves of about 7.4 billion tons, more than 94 percent of which is anthracite and bituminous coal.

—Ryan Scott

GREAT SOCIETY

They better check out Lenin's pamphlet, *Imperialism*—"NYSE [New York Stock



Exchange] is getting ready to take on the world"—news headline, *Los Angeles Times* business section.

Truly stunning—BBC news reports that the high voltage Taser stun gun is now available in pink, blue, silver, and black. It fits into a handbag like a cell phone.

Read it and rebel—"More youngsters in L.A. County Living in Poverty: Nearly three-quarters of the families with children are struggling says a new report. Home prices are a big factor."—*Los Angeles Times* headline.

Criminal for sure—"The Los Angeles County Jail system lacks enough doctors, nurses and other medical workers to meet the most basic needs of inmates, resulting in long delays in treatment for conditions ranging from hernias to heart disease."—news report.

Give and take medicine swindle—A study found that medical researchers who check new drug products in hospitals and medical schools have ties, financially, with the manufacturers.

Judges went out running?— A federal appeals court struck down a Bush administration survey to reduce smog. The court countered that half of the U.S. population suffers from smog, mostly those with asthma and other respiratory difficulties.

P.S.— Clippings for this column are appreciated. Send them to Great Society, Pathfinder Books, 4229 S. Central Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90011.

Iowa campus exhibits works by Cuban women artists

BY KEVIN DWIRE

DES MOINES, Iowa—"Cuba: Women Artists in the Revolution" opened at Drake University's Anderson Gallery here January 26. The exhibition, which runs through February 16, is the first time that these 50 works of Cuban art have appeared in the Midwest.

Featured artists include Jacqueline Brito, Yamilys Brito, Rocio Garcia, Elsa Mora, Sandra Ramos, and Julia Valdes.

"Americans come back from Cuba and say that Cuba is not like it is portrayed," said philosophy professor Jon Torgerson at an opening reception attended by almost 100 people. Torgerson, who has traveled to Cuba 12 times since 1986 and took the first class of U.S. undergraduate students there in 1996, spoke out against Washington's travel ban, which prohibits U.S. citizens from visiting the island nation. "Exposure to the arts in Cuba might be a way to show the richness of its culture," he said.

"Any exhibit of Cuban art at this point is still quite unique," said Sandra Levinson, director of the Center for Cuban Studies in New York, which loaned the art for the exhibit. "Certainly, there have been very few shows of Cuban women artists, and it's even rarer to have a show devoted exclusively to women artists."

For years U.S. trade laws aimed at isolating and starving the Cuban Revolution made it illegal to import original artwork from this island nation. This was overturned in 1993 when Levinson won a lawsuit against the Treasury Department to allow the importation of Cuban artwork. This enabled the Center for Cuban Studies to amass a sizable collection of sculptures and paintings.



Militant/Diana Newberry

Students look at Drake University exhibit of art by Cuban women January 26

Torgerson and his wife Betty are sponsoring the exhibition, along with Drake's Center for Global Citizenship, Center for the Humanities, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences, Office of the President, and the Women's Studies Program.

Palestinian Americans score legal victory in 'racketeering' case

BY ILONA GERSH

BRIDGEVIEW, Illinois—More than 250 people jammed into the Bridgeview mosque February 1 to celebrate the court victory of two Palestinian-Americans. Earlier in the day, Mohammed Salah of this southern suburb of Chicago, and Abdelhaleem Ashqar of Washington, D.C., were acquitted of racketeering conspiracy.

The government claimed the two had violated U.S. laws in aiding the Palestinian organization Hamas, which Washington alleges is carrying out "terrorist" activities against Israel.

Representatives of the Mosque Foundation, the Islamic Council, and the legal defense team, as well as the two defendants, spoke at the celebration.

Salah was arrested in 1993 by Israeli soldiers at a military checkpoint in the Gaza Strip. He was accused of being a leader of Hamas and funding "terrorist" activity. During two months of interrogation, he was tortured by Israeli Secret Service agents, who forced him to sign a false confession.

After serving five years in a military prison in Israel, he returned home in 1997 to his family in the United States. The U.S. government classified him as a "Specially Designated Terrorist." All of his family assets were frozen. Salah had to obtain approval from the Treasury Department to get a job, retain an attorney, open a bank account, or to receive medical care and other services. He was under house arrest, wearing an electronic tracking anklet.

The court proceedings were blatantly undemocratic. The trial was closed to the public during six days of testimony about Salah's torture, when the prosecution tried to make a case that Salah willingly confessed.

His wife, Maryam Salah, who speaks publicly in his defense, explained the truth was very different. Salah was thrown hooded and handcuffed into the back of a jeep and driven to an interrogation center, she said. He was questioned for nine hours at a time and forced to crouch on an undersized and unbalanced stool with his hands handcuffed behind him. The Israeli agents kept him awake, put him in a cold refrigerator cell, covered his head with a urine-soaked canvas bag, and threatened his family.

Even the defendants were not allowed in the courtroom for two days while two Israeli Secret Service agents testified anonymously.

At the celebration, Mohammed Salah thanked those who went to court in his support. A bus from the Bridgeview mosque took supporters to the courthouse every day. Salah said supporters helped put food on the table for his family during the trial.

Although acquitted of the main charge against them, Salah and Ashqar were found guilty of lesser charges. Salah was convicted of obstruction of justice, stemming from when he denied being a member of Hamas in a civil suit by the parents of a U.S. teenager killed in 1996 in a drive-by shooting while visiting Israel. Ashqar was convicted of criminal contempt and obstruction of justice. They now face maximum sentences of five years, as opposed to 40 years to life imprisonment if they had been convicted on the main charge. Sentencing is scheduled for June 15.

25, 50, AND 75 YEARS AGO

THE MILITANT — 25 CENTS — A SOCIALIST NEWSWEEKLY/PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE

February 26, 1982

More than 50,000 industrial workers in South Africa, mainly Black, stopped working on February 11 to take part in a thirty-minute protest against the apartheid regime's practice of detaining opponents without trial. Among the factories where the stoppage was observed were the Ford and General Motors auto plants.

The strike was sparked by the death in detention of Dr. Neil Aggett, a young white physician who was secretary of the African Food and Canning Workers Union, which is mostly Black. Aggett, who was arrested on November 27 along with sixteen other opponents of the white supremacist regime in South Africa, had been held under the Terrorism Act, which allows the government to hold suspects without trial for as long as it chooses. He was found hanged in his cell on February 5, in what prison authorities claim was a suicide.

THE MILITANT — PUBLISHED IN THE INTERESTS OF THE WORKING PEOPLE — NEW YORK, N.Y. — FIVE (5) CENTS

February 25, 1957

Ninety-seven Southern Negro leaders wired President Eisenhower, Feb. 14, that they would organize a mass march on Washington if he maintains his silence about the white-supremacist reign of terror in the South. The 97, who are spokesmen of Negro communities in 10 Southern states, met in New Orleans last week in a two-day Southern Negro Leaders Conference. Referring to the telegram to Eisenhower, Rev. Martin Luther King of Montgomery, Ala., told the press that thousands of Negroes, joined by thousands of whites in both the North and South would go to Washington.

As the Negro leaders wired Eisenhower that they are faced with what appears to be an organized campaign of terror and violence, a dynamite explosion in the heart of the Negro section of Clinton, Tenn., injured a woman and baby and damaged 30 homes. Police also said they have made no arrests.

THE MILITANT — Weekly Organ of the Communist League of America [Opposition]

February 27, 1932

The latest dispatches from Berlin report the long expected announcement of Hitler's candidacy in the coming presidential elections to be held on March 19. The *New York Times* of February 24, 1932, in its editorial comment on this subject, chides the German reactionary briskly for his "tactical" mistake. "By lining up with the venerable president of the Reich," the *Times* goes on to say, "he would have added to his dimensions as a responsible statesman without surrendering anything of his prestige as a crusader." It is quite plain that Wall Street is rather vexed with the developments in German internal policy. Reconciled for some time now with Fascist ascendancy it nevertheless dreads the thought of social convulsions conjured up by the picture of a break with "legalism" by the Nazi leader, to whose popularity with international reaction it has, of late, contributed not a little.

Havana book fair



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

Tens of thousands came out to participate in Cuba's 16th International Book Fair, which opened February 9 in Havana, the Cuban capital.

Continued from front page

Eduardo Torres Cuevas.

In his speech at the inaugural event, López said the Havana book fair is "not about the exploitation of many for the benefit of a few, but about the full dignity of man," a result of Cuba's socialist revolution.

He emphasized that Cuban culture encompasses the work of all writers and artists. At the fair, he said, "The book is king, without exclusions of any kind." He said the literary festival must "go beyond any limitations our culture may have shown, borne, and suffered over the years."

López gave a roll call of dozens of leading Cuban writers throughout the country's history. The list cited not only literary figures such as Alejo Carpentier and Nicolás Guillén, but a number of prominent Cuban authors who in past decades left the island because of their political opposition to the revolution and who are not published here. Among these, he mentioned Guillermo Cabrera Infante, Heberto Padilla, Reynaldo Arenas, and Jesús Díaz.

The remarks by López were charged with meaning for those in the audience because of debates on the Cuban Revolution's cultural policy that have unfolded here since the beginning of the year.

The controversy was precipitated by a January 5 TV interview with Luis Pavón. As director of the government's National Council of Culture in the first half of the 1970s, Pavón implemented policies against many writers, artists, and others deemed politically unreliable that prevented them from being published or having the materials and conditions necessary to work. Such policies, institutionalized in the Soviet Union by the 1930s and later by other Stalinist regimes, made inroads in Cuba during the 1970s. They were a reversal of the policy, championed from the beginning by Cuba's revolutionary leadership, of guaranteeing full freedom of artistic expression to all but the open enemies of the revolution.

The favorable TV portrayal of Pavón sparked outrage among many artists and writers. Following several meetings between a number of them and government officials, the leadership of the Union of Cuban Artists and Writers (UNEAC) issued a statement, published in the January 18 issue of the Cuban daily *Granma*, that shared "the rightful indignation" of its members at the TV program and underscored the fact that "from the very first moment we had the most absolute support of the [Cuban Communist] Party leadership." The statement reaffirmed the revolution's "irreversible" policy of cultural freedom.

As part of the ongoing discussion, UNEAC organized a January 30 conference, attended by some 450 people, including Minister of Culture Prieto, at Casa de las Américas, a major Havana cultural institution. It was addressed by writer Ambrosio Fornet, who called for public discussion and education about the 1971–76 *pavonato* (Pávon reign), a period often referred to in Cuba as the *Quinquenio Gris* (Gray Five-Year Period). Fornet stressed the importance of this especially for the newest generations, who know little about that history.

At the February 8 book fair inauguration, Prieto applauded López's theme of embracing all Cuban writers regardless of their political views, calling his list "enormously ecumenical." His remarks were widely seen as a reaffirmation by the Cuban leadership that there will be no return to the censorship and ostracism of the 1970s in the field of culture.

Prieto highlighted the expanding breadth of the book fair, which this year will travel to 39 other cities, ending March 11 in Santiago de Cuba. Since becoming an annual event seven years ago, the fair has grown in attendance from 150,000 in Havana in 2000 to more than 5 million nationwide in 2006.

He announced that more than 1,000 titles with a combined print run of 8.5 million will be available at the fair, compared with last year's total of 5.5 million.

In addition to Cuban publishing houses, 82 publishers from other countries have exhibits. Among them is Pathfinder, which this year is presenting, in English and Spanish, *The First and Second Declarations of Havana* (see photo box on this page).

'First and Second Declarations of Havana' presented at Havana International Book Fair



Militant/Jonathan Silberman

HAVANA—One of the dozens of new books launched at the 16th Havana International Book Fair was Pathfinder's *The First and Second Declarations of Havana*. The February 13 book presentation featured a panel of speakers including José Ramón Fernández, vice president of Cuba's Council of Ministers; Mario Rodríguez of the Association of Combatants of the Cuban Revolution; Fernando Rojas, president of the Federation of University Students in Havana; Gladys Hernández of the Center for Research on the World Economy (CIEM); and Mary-Alice Waters, the book's editor and president of Pathfinder. Iraida Aguirrechu of the Cuban publisher Editora Política chaired the event. Some 75 people attended the meeting, where 64 copies of the book were sold, 17 of them in English.

From left: Rojas, Rodríguez, Fernández, Waters, Aguirrechu, and Hernández.

—MARTÍN KOPPEL

Russia's president condemns Washington over NATO expansion, 'missile defense'

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

In a February 10 speech at an international security conference in Munich, Germany, Russian president Vladimir Putin sharply criticized the expansion of NATO and Washington's moves to place troops, radar, and other components of its "missile defense" system in eastern Europe.

Over the past decade the governments of Bulgaria, Romania, Hungary, Poland, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, and Slovenia in eastern Europe, as well as the Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, have become members of NATO. Putin said the admission of these countries has nothing to do with "modernization of the Alliance" and present a "serious provocation that reduces the level of mutual trust."

"It turns out that NATO has put its frontline forces on our borders," he said. "And we have the right to ask: against whom is this expansion directed?

"The use of force can only be considered legitimate if the decision is sanctioned by the UN," Putin said. "And we do not need to substitute NATO or

Continued on page 7

Donate to cover costs of 'Militant' reporting team to Cuba

A team of *Militant* reporters is in Cuba to cover the International Book Fair taking place in Havana and other Cuban cities, as well as other political developments in the country. They will also cover high school meetings organized by the Union of Young Communists in Cuba, where the Young Socialists have been invited to speak about life under capitalism. The trip's costs exceed $12,000. Please donate generously to help the *Militant* pay for the trip and continue fielding similar international teams. Earmark checks or money orders "Havana book fair travel fund," and send your contribution to the *Militant* at 306 W. 37th St., 10th floor, New York, NY 10018.

Washington to establish new Africa Command

BY RÓGER CALERO

February 10—U.S. president George Bush announced February 6 the establishment of a new military command to oversee operations by Washington's armed forces in Africa.

The creation of the United States Africa Command, which has been under discussion for years, is the Pentagon's latest step in restructuring the U.S. military around the globe.

The announcement came soon after the U.S.-orchestrated invasion of Somalia by Ethiopian troops and U.S. Special Forces routed the Somalia Islamic Courts Council (SICC) from Mogadishu and most of the rest of the country in December. In the lead-up to making public the new command, the U.S. government had also increased its military presence in the Horn of Africa as part of its "war on terror." These efforts are aimed at expanding Washington's dominance in Africa and edging out its competitors, especially in oil-rich West Africa and the Gulf of Guinea.

Prior to the creation of the Africa Command, oversight of U.S. military operations in Africa was divided between three different structures—the Europe, Central, and Pacific commands. Testifying before the U.S. Senate Armed Services Committee on February 6, Defense Secretary Robert Gates said the creation of the command would eliminate an "outdated arrangement left over from the cold war."

"The view was that the time has come, in fact, with the increasing importance of the continent to the U.S., that we could better meet our requirements by standing up one unified command to consolidate all of (Defense Department) activities," said Navy Rear Adm. Robert Moeller, who is in charge of implementing its establishment. The new command is expected to be in place by September 2008.

In November 2002 the Pentagon had set up the Combined Joint Task Force Horn of Africa for the purpose of ending "terrorist" traffic between the Arabian Peninsula and Africa. Shortly after its creation, the task force was expanded, setting up base at Camp Lemonier, in Djibouti, with 1,600 troops. This task force was the real predecessor of the Africa Command.

U.S. forces have taken part in training border troops in Djibouti and Ethiopia, as well as maritime forces in Kenya, according to the October 21 issue of *USA Today*.

In January, U.S. helicopter gunships operated by Special Operations units carried out bombing attacks in southern Somalia, to defeat the retreating forces of the SICC. Washington has also stepped up its military presence in other parts of Africa. In 2005, it deployed some 1,000 soldiers to seven African countries for joint exercises with local troops. Joint maneuvers are scheduled to take place this year with troops from Algeria, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, and Tunisia, reported the July 24 *Army Times*.



U.S. Special Forces soldier with members of Malian Armed Forces during military exercises in Mali, November 2006.

London uses 'antiterror' arrests to undermine basic rights

Continued from front page

February 9. The men were then driven to Belmarsh high-security prison. The charges against five of them stem from an alleged plot to kill a soldier and post film footage of the execution on the Internet.

The January 31 raids were carried out by the recently established Midlands Counter Terrorism Unit, the Metropolitan Police, West Midlands Police, and MI5—the government's secret police. Cops raided 12 premises and cordoned off streets. They appealed for aid from local Muslims and published leaflets about the raids in several languages. Most of the area's residents of Asian descent come from a Pakistani-Kashmiri background. The local mosque's president, Ayub Pervaz, offered use of their building to the cops for carrying out operations in the area.

Home Secretary John Reid said the raids were a "major operation." They were preceded by six months of surveillance by what the BBC described as "MI5 and other agencies . . . [using] the full range of police and surveillance techniques." Cops have seized more than 4,500 items.

During the raids police smashed through the door of The Maktabah, an Islamic bookshop in Birmingham, stripping the shelves and taking computers, books, and leaflets. The shop had been raided previously in 2000 and 2003. It was co-founded by Moazzem Begg, one of the Britons released from the U.S. concentration camp at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, after being held there for three years without a trial. The cops also sealed off the Dar Makkah International bookshop, near Birmingham's Central Mosque.

The charges the police laid against the five men include "intention" to kidnap and "intention" to supply money or property to support "terrorism." The Terrorism 2006 Act included a new provision that allows the prosecution of anyone preparing or training for a "terrorist act," or for making a statement authorities can deem as "glorification of terrorism."

In a further move by the rulers' in using these anti-working-class measures, Abu Izzadeen was arrested February 9 on suspicion of "glorifying terrorism." According to *The Times,* he was allegedly filmed describing non-Muslims as "animals" and "cowards." Izzadeen had previously risen to prominence when he heckled Home Secretary Reid at a meeting of Muslims in east London last year. He was released on strict bail conditions: surrendering his passport, living and sleeping at home, reporting daily to the police, and paying a £50,000 bond (£1 = US$1.95). Izzadeen is a former leader of the groups al-Ghurabaa and Saved Sect, which were banned by the government.

Abu Bakr, one of those arrested in the Birmingham raids and later released without charge, told the BBC Newsnight program that Britain is "a police state for Muslims." Prime Minister Anthony Blair spoke out against Bakr's remark, as did opposition leader David Cameron of the Tories. Labour Member of Parliament Shahid Malik, who is Muslim, said Bakr's arrest and release "doesn't lead to the conclusion that we're in a police state."

In response to the Birmingham raids, the U.S. *Investor's Business Daily* ran an article February 5 describing the alleged plot to kill the British soldier as "ghastly." It argued that there is a "worldwide clash of civilizations." In an anti-Muslim diatribe, it said, "The terrorists are getting all their violent ideas . . . even the beheadings—right out of their holy book. . . . They are disciplined soldiers in a holy war." The conservative daily argued that "it's time to take off the gloves. We must declare war on jihad—and all its participants and supporters."

On February 9 the British government also closed down Jameah Islameah, an Islamic school in east Sussex. The school had been raided by "antiterrorist" police last September. Education Minister James Knight boasted, "In the past three years more than 45 independent schools have shut down as a consequence of this government's tough approach."

'Missile defense'

Continued from page 6

the EU for the UN."

The Russian president was also critical of construction by Washington of "forward operating" military bases in Romania and Bulgaria, with similar plans being pursued in Poland and Hungary.

"Plans to expand certain elements of the antimissile defense system to Europe cannot help but disturb us," Putin stated. He was referring to talks between Washington and the governments of Poland and the Czech Republic on placing U.S. antimissile radar and interceptors on their soil.

A day earlier Russia's defense minister, Sergei Ivanov, spoke at a NATO session in Seville, Spain. Ivanov also criticized the U.S. antimissile system expansion. He warned that Moscow has "the capability to surpass any antimissile system," the February 10 *New York Times* reported.

A spokesman for the U.S. president said the White House was "surprised and disappointed" by Putin's remarks, according to Reuters.

Bank in Pittsburgh fails, first in United States since 2004

BY BRIAN WILLIAMS

The Metropolitan Savings Bank of Pittsburgh was closed February 2 by the Pennsylvania Department of Banking. This is the first bank failure in the United States since 2004.

The bank had about $15.8 million in assets as of last September. The Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation (FDIC), which insured the bank's assets, was designated the receiver. FDIC then handed about $12 million of the failed bank's insured deposits over to the Allegheny Valley Bank of Pittsburgh. About $1.2 million in Metropolitan Savings deposits in 70 accounts exceeded the FDIC's insurance limit of $100,000.

Metropolitan Savings failed due to the fact that "the capital of the bank has been significantly impaired, that the bank is operating in an unsafe and unsound condition to transact business, and that the bank is likely to be unable to pay its obligations or meet its depositors' demands in the normal course of business," a spokeswoman for state banking regulators told Reuters.

The last bank to fail was Utah's bank of Ephraim in June 2004. The last major U.S. bank failure occurred in July 2001 when Superior Bank in Chicago, which had about $1.8 billion in assets, was closed.

Socialist revolution and fight against colonialism

Below is an excerpt from "Manifesto of the Communist International to the workers of the world," which was adopted at the first world congress of the Comintern, held in Moscow, March 2–6, 1919. It appears in volume one of The First Five Years of the Communist International *by Leon Trotsky. This is one of Pathfinder's Books of the Month in February. The manifesto, for which Trotsky was the reporter, placed the International squarely on the side of the oppressed peoples against their colonial rulers. Copyright © 1945 by Pathfinder Press. Reprinted by permission.*

BOOKS OF THE MONTH



Presiding Committee at First Congress of Communist International in Moscow, March 1919. Left to right: Gustav Klinger and Hugo Eberlein from Germany, Russian revolutionary leader V.I. Lenin, and Fritz Platten from Switzerland.

The national state which gave a mighty impulsion to capitalist development has become too narrow for the further development of productive forces. This renders all the more precarious the position of small states, hemmed in by the major powers of Europe and scattered through other sections of the world. These small states, which have arisen at different times as fragments chipped from bigger ones, as so much small change in payment for various services rendered and as strategic buffers, retain their own dynasties, their own ruling cliques, their own imperialist pretensions, their own diplomatic intrigues. Prior to the war their phantom independence rested on the selfsame thing as the equilibrium of Europe: the uninterrupted antagonism between the two imperialist camps. The war has disrupted this equilibrium. By giving at first an enormous preponderance to Germany the war compelled the small states to seek their salvation under the magnanimous wings of German militarism. After Germany was crushed, the bourgeoisie of the small states, together with their respective patriotic "Socialists," turned their faces to the victorious Allied imperialism and began seeking guarantees for their continued independent existence in the hypocritical points of the Wilsonian program. . . .

The small peoples can be assured the opportunity of free existence only by the proletarian revolution which will free the productive forces of all countries from the tentacles of the national states, unifying the peoples in closest economic collaboration on the basis of a common economic plan, and offering the weakest and smallest people an opportunity of freely and independently directing their national cultural affairs without any detriment to the unified and centralized European and world economy.

The last war, which was by and large a war for colonies, was at the same time a war conducted with the help of colonies. The colonial populations were drawn into the European war on an unprecedented scale. Indians, Negroes, Arabs and Madagascans fought on the territories of Europe—for the sake of what? For the sake of their right to continue to remain the slaves of England and France. Never before has the infamy of capitalist rule in the colonies been delineated so clearly; never before has the problem of colonial slavery been posed so sharply as it is today.

A number of open insurrections and the revolutionary ferment in all the colonies have hence arisen. In Europe itself, Ireland keeps signaling through sanguinary street battles that she still remains and still feels herself to be an enslaved country. In Madagascar, Annam and elsewhere the troops of the bourgeois republic have more than once quelled the uprisings of colonial slaves during the war. In India the revolutionary movement has not subsided for a single day and has recently led to the greatest labor strikes in Asia, which the English government has met by ordering its armored cars into action in Bombay.

The colonial question has been thus posed in its fullest measure not only on the maps at the diplomatic congress in Paris but also within the colonies themselves. At best, Wilson's program has as its task: to effect a change of labels with regard to colonial slavery. The emancipation of the colonies is conceivable only in conjunction with the emancipation of the working class in the metropolises. The workers and peasants not only of Annam, Algiers and Bengal, but also of Persia and Armenia, will gain their opportunity of independent existence only in that hour when the workers of England and France, having overthrown Lloyd George and Clemenceau, will have taken state power into their own hands. Even now the struggle in the more developed colonies while taking place only under the banner of national liberation immediately assumes a more or less clearly defined social character. If capitalist Europe has violently dragged the most backward sections of the world into the whirlpool of capitalist relations, then socialist Europe will come to the aid of liberated colonies with her technology, her organization and her ideological influence in order to facilitate their transition to a planned and organized socialist economy.

Colonial slaves of Africa and Asia! The hour of proletarian dictatorship in Europe will strike for you as the hour of your own emancipation!

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EDITORIAL

Justice for African American farmers

Working people and the entire labor movement should back exploited farmers fighting for land, including African American producers. In addition to the exploitation under the capitalist rents and mortgages system all family farmers face, farmers who are Black face decades-old racist discrimination and have been driven off their land in disproportionate numbers.

The recent conference in Dallas of the National Black Farmers Association showed that the struggle against this kind of anti-Black prejudice—fostered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and other government institutions, as well as private banks and capitalist business—is alive.

In 1999, following mobilizations by thousands of farmers and their supporters in Washington and a number of southern states, African American farmers forced the USDA through a class action lawsuit to admit responsibility for a historic pattern of discrimination they have faced. As the USDA settled with a consent decree many farmers opposed, it agreed to pay a miserly $50,000 to each farmer who would provide some evidence of bias. However, 86 percent of the 94,000 farmers who applied for compensation were turned down, overwhelmingly due to stringent deadlines the government imposed without adequate notice.

That's the kind of capitalist justice working people can expect under either Democratic or Republican administrations.

Farmers who are Black are denied loans disproportionately, and the banks steal their land at a faster rate than other farmers. In 1920 there were 900,000 African American farmers in the United States. According to the 2002 U.S. census, that number is now 29,000—just over 1 percent of the country's 2.1 million farmers.

The fight by Black farmers is part of the struggle of working people against the ravages of the capitalist system. Their demands for compensation, access to land, and treatment with dignity speak to the interests of all producers on the land and beyond.

Working farmers are plagued by commodity prices too low to meet the costs of production. This cost-price squeeze drives them to debt slavery to the banks and other financial institutions. Many can barely make ends meet. In 2002, some 1.5 million U.S. farms—over two-thirds of those in the country—reported annual sales of $25,000 or less.

While subjected to different forms of exploitation, workers and small farmers have a common enemy—the capitalist class. An alliance of the exploited producers on the land and industrial and other workers is indispensable on the road toward the toilers taking power in order to end class exploitation and build a society based on human solidarity, one that can meet the needs of all.

Farmers who are Black are in the forefront of this struggle.

Working people should stand with African American and other exploited farmers and demand: Immediate compensation for racist discrimination! Stop farm foreclosures! Affordable credit for working farmers!

Black Farmers Association conference

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programs, gave a presentation, farmer Edward Greer, 35, took the floor. He spoke about the runaround he has received from government agencies in trying to get help starting a farm in Mississippi. Greer described multiple visits to the Farm Service Agency and Extension Service offices that produced no results. "They would talk like politicians and end up wasting my time," he said.

Other farmers expressed frustration at the way government bureaucrats have continually put them off and even refused to wait on them. "I didn't drive 300 miles to come here and not get straight answers," one farmer told Knight. "Too many Black farmers have had strokes and died waiting to be compensated."

"When is the Black farmer going to get any kind of justice?" he asked. This prompted conference organizer John Boyd to dismiss the guest speakers and turn to the question farmers came to discuss—how to press the government to make good on its promise to compensate farmers who have faced systematic anti-Black discrimination.

"The vault has proved empty for Black farmers," Guy Manning Sr., a farmer from Texas, told the *Militant.* He was referring to the obstruction of justice these farmers have faced since a federal court issued a consent degree in *Pigford v. Glickman*, settling a class-action lawsuit by tens of thousands of African American farmers. In that 1999 settlement, the federal government agreed to give each farmer who could provide minimal evidence of discrimination between 1981 and 1996 a $50,000 tax-exempt payment, debt forgiveness, and preferential treatment on future loan applications

The settlement was based on a partial admission by Washington that farmers who are Black had faced decades of racist discrimination. This contributed to driving them off their land in disproportionate numbers. In 1920 there were nearly 1 million African American farmers in the United States; one in seven farms was Black-owned, compared to 1 in 100 by 1998.

Boyd referred to a 2004 report by the NBFA and the Environmental Working Group that showed that 81,000 of the 94,000 farmers who sought restitution under *Pigford* were denied. Of that number, 71,800 were turned down for failing to meet deadlines imposed without adequate notification.

Boyd urged support for the Pigford Claims Remedy Act, which was introduced in Congress February 7. "All participants denied justice should sign up to force the government to do what it promised in the original decision," said Boyd. Similar legislation was presented last year in Congress but did not go anywhere.

Steve Warshell contributed to this article.

LETTERS

Sinn Fein and the police

Recent statements by Gerry Adams and others in the Sinn Fein leadership and that party's recognition of the British police in Ireland are being used by ultraleft and other petty-bourgeois currents as an excuse to attack Sinn Fein's leadership of the Republican movement.

I think it's a healthy thing when an oppressed people learn to distrust the police force of their rulers and I don't believe that any number of Sinn Fein statements can reverse that consciousness among Irish people in the north of Ireland.

I consider myself a supporter of the Irish struggle and I would very much appreciate any help in trying to understand what the latest move by Sinn Fein means for working people around the world and those who support the rights of self-determination of oppressed people.

Natan Mosquera
United Kingdom

Undocumented workers

Your coverage of the fight of undocumented workers is superb. Keep it up. This struggle, I think, will determine what happens in working-class politics in this country. These workers are the most oppressed and perhaps the most militant.

The immigrant workers and their allies will be among those most interested in joining a revolutionary movement. If other workers are turned against them, as the capitalists would like, the labor movement will suffer catastrophically. The *Militant* seems to be one of the few papers that have the correct position. And most importantly, you are actively involved.

Jeanne Corvan
Hartford, Connecticut

Capitalism

I feel the nature of capitalism has changed in the last few years to serve only the ruling classes and to shortchange the workers. My taxes are going up, but the rich pay less.

Robert Keith
Plymouth, Massachusetts

The letters column is an open forum for all viewpoints on subjects of interest to working people. Please keep your letters brief. Where necessary they will be abridged. Please indicate if you prefer that your initials be used rather than your full name.

U.S. forces in Iraq

Continued from front page

after his unanimous and swift confirmation by the U.S. Senate, Petraeus had set up shop in the Washington office of Rep. Mitch McConnell, a Republican from Kentucky. From there the general lobbied members of Congress to support the deployment of 21,500 more troops to Iraq, a decision announced January 10 by U.S. president George Bush.

Meanwhile, the tit-for-tat struggle for governmental power between competing factions of the Iraqi bourgeoisie continues to claim dozens of lives daily. Some 67 Iraqi civilians were reportedly killed and 155 wounded when bombs exploded February 12 in Baghdad's central Shorja market. The bombings came as the Maliki administration marked the first anniversary of the bombing of a Shiite mosque in Samarra. The bloodletting between Shiite- and Sunni-run militias has substantially escalated since that bombing.

Petraeus has been lauded by supporters and critics of the White House escalation of the war. Sen. Lindsey Graham, a Republican from South Carolina, has dubbed the troop escalation the "Petraeus Doctrine."

Crackdown in Baghdad

Iraqi Lt. Gen. Abboud Gambar announced on TV February 13 that the country's borders with Iran and Syria would be closed for 72 hours and that a 9:00 p.m.-6:00 a.m. curfew in Baghdad would start an hour early. Washington and Baghdad have charged that weapons and armed groups fighting U.S. and Iraqi government forces enter the country through Iran and Syria.

Tens of thousands of Iraqis who have occupied abandoned homes in Baghdad have been given 15 days to show proof of ownership or permission to live in the home in order to avoid eviction. Many are Shiites who moved into homes abandoned by Sunnis driven out by Shiite-led militias. Almost 10 formerly mixed neighborhoods in Baghdad are now almost entirely Shiite.

Gambar also announced expanded use of searches and interrogations, including breaking into homes and cars deemed dangerous, opening mail, and tapping phones. All convoys would be subject to searches.

U.S. and Iraqi government troops stormed Iraq's health ministry February 8 and arrested the country's deputy health minister, Hakim al-Zamili. A U.S. military statement accused Zamili of being a "senior official" in Muqtada al-Sadr's Mahdi Army, a Shiite militia, and of allowing use of ambulances and hospitals to carry out kidnappings and killings. The health ministry is one of six controlled by supporters of al-Sadr, who, U.S. officials say, has fled Iraq to Iran. Al-Sadr's aides would not confirm his departure, according to press reports. Maliki depends on al-Sadr's support in the Shiite governing bloc.

In an indication of the tensions between the Maliki administration and the occupying U.S. forces, the Iraqi premier and his government's vice presidents did not attend the ceremony installing Petraeus. Maliki sent instead a low-level delegation consisting of his security adviser and defense and interior ministers.

Broad congressional support for aims of war

Last week, Republicans in the Senate blocked the vote on a nonbinding resolution opposing the troop escalation after Democrats would not allow votes on other resolutions supporting the White House plan. Among those opposing the vote was Republican John Warner, one of its principal cosponsors, and "Independent Democrat" Joseph Lieberman.

The Republicans were pressing for a vote on a resolution by John McCain, a presidential hopeful of their party. McCain's proposal supports the escalation and sets "benchmarks" on progress towards the Iraqi government taking control of security. Another resolution by Sen. Judd Gregg, Republican from New Hampshire, promises not to cut funds for the Iraq war. Many prominent Democrats have backed such proposals too.

Carl Levin, chairman of the Senate's Armed Services Committee, said a vote on cutting funds for deploying more troops to Iraq is not necessary. "We don't want to withhold funds from the troops in the field," he said.

A nonbinding resolution Democrats introduced February 12 in the House of Representatives opposing the dispatch of more troops to Iraq makes a similar point. "Congress and the American people will continue to support and protect the members of the United States Armed Forces who are serving or who have served bravely and honorably in Iraq," it says.